

# **Junior Cross Country Runner Ryan Watts Is ICAN Clinic Male Athlete Of The Month For Edwardsville High School**

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EDWARDSVILLE - Junior cross country runner Ryan Watts has emerged as one of the Edwardsville Tigers' top runners, having won or setting the pace for the team in many important races this season, most recently winning the Southwestern Conference meet in Shiloh.

For his accomplishments so far this season, Watts has been named Riverbender.com's Male Athlete of the Month at Edwardsville High for October, 2020.

Watts, who runs for head coach George Patrylak, came to the Tigers when his family moved to the area from Aurora before his sophomore season, and has enjoyed cross country for many years.

"I started cross country in fifth grade, and have not looked back," Watts said. "The two things I enjoy most about cross country is the family atmosphere you have with your team, and the competition within the sport that is just not the same for any sport."

Watts thanked his parents and both his coaches and teammates for their support and for pushing him to become the runner that he is today.

"My parents have been behind me every step of the way," Watts said, "supporting each decision I have made, and each has made so many sacrifices to help me succeed. I would also like to thank my teammates and coaches for pushing me day in and day out to make me who I am."

Being involved in a sport such as cross country has helped Watts develop his work ethic, and seeing how his hard work translates into success on the courses he runs.

"I think my hard work mentally starts with cross country," Watts said. "The sport is so grueling, yet so competitive, that if you do not work your hardest every single day, then you won't be the best. I think that carries over into life. There is absolutely no reason not to give, whether school or something else, your 100 percent best every day."

The hard work has also paid off in the classroom, and Watts achieved a perfect 4.0-grade point average in his sophomore year.

Watts is also a member of the Tigers' track team, running the distance races of 1,600 meters and 3,200 meters. He hopes to continue to run in college, and is in contact with five NCAA Division-I schools at this time, but politely declined to discuss who the schools are. He does have a specific major in mind, however.

"I have my mind set on journalism," Watts said. "Specifically sports journalism. I always have found it amazing to think that one day, I could cover sports and turn it into a job."

His ambitions of being a sportswriter come natural to Watts. He's a die-hard Cardinals fan, with running and baseball taking up much of his time.

"I love watching, then covering, baseball," Watts said. "I am a huge fan of the Cardinals. Running and baseball takes up about 90 percent of what I think about on a daily basis."

**Riverbender.com's Athlete of the Month program is made possible by the generosity of our sponsors and the cooperation of our area high schools. This is a great accomplishment and one to be very proud of. Please join us in congratulating this young athlete. We at Riverbender.com wish you continued success in your future!**